

3 Woodlands Road,  
Barnes,  
London SW13

18<sup>th</sup> January 1919

Dear C

Although Mildred and Trixie have left us this week we have been having a good time. Your notice as to MC came out in the Supplement of the London Gazette dated 11<sup>th</sup> January 1919 and I brought it home on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup>, - the day that Mildred left. Trixie copied it out at once and sent it on to Birmingham.

Ella has gone to Birmingham today and we shall be a small number tomorrow so that I shall have an opportunity of a long chat (all one side) with you then.

I could not get any Gillette's blades yesterday. They told me some would be in next Tuesday & then I will get you a dozen. In the meantime I am sending you two I had by me. If you want them to last you must wipe them quite dry directly after using them and I am sending cotton wool for the purpose. It is the bother of taking the safety to pieces and putting it together again that makes me prefer the old fashioned blade. Everyone to his taste.

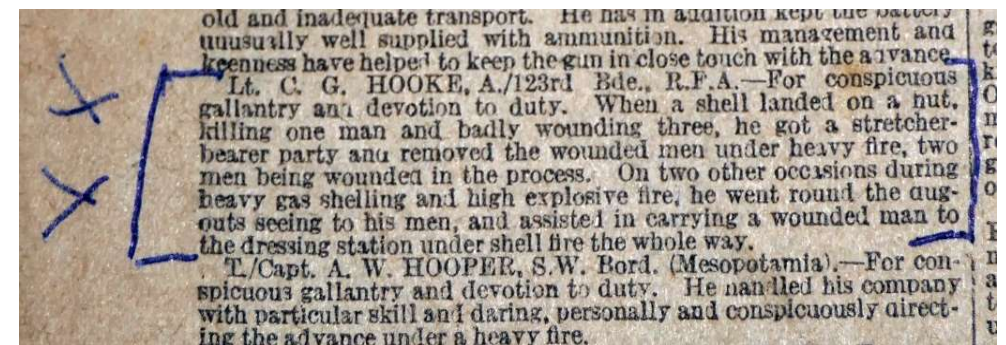
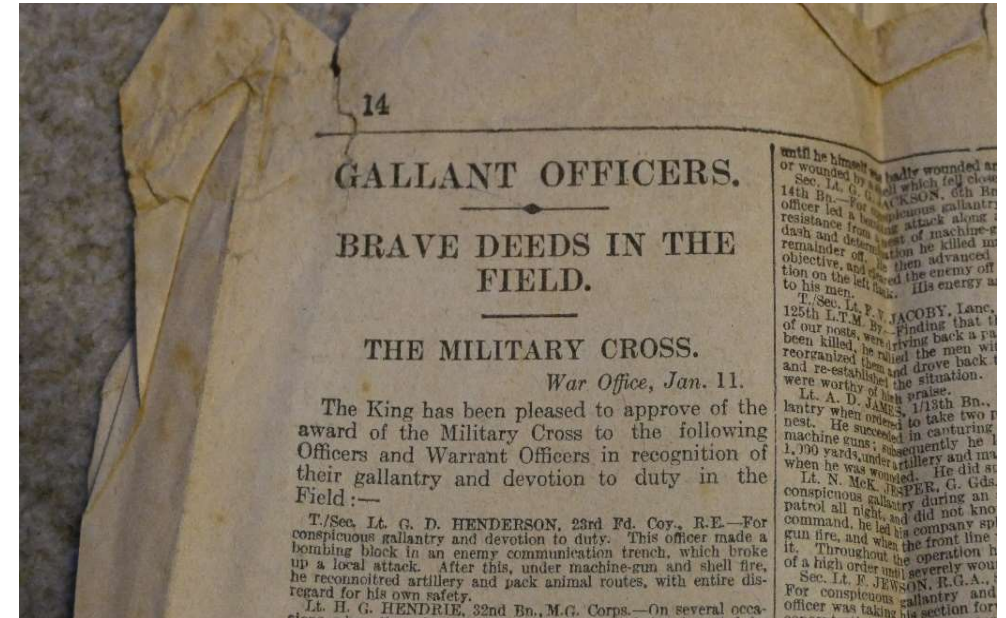
We live with you when we read your letters.

I have much to say but must catch the post.

Hope your turn for leave will come at Easter - middle of April.

Yrs ever

GAH



3 Woodlands Road,  
Barnes,  
London SW13

19<sup>th</sup> January 1919

Dear Cyril,

I had a splendid night's rest and woke up to find all the trees covered with hoar frost and a slight fog hiding the sun. After breakfast Francie and I walked up Putney Park Lane to the little church there and heard about the work the Religious Tract Society has done in distributing literature for the benefit of missionaries etc.

There is a big prejudice against the Society which I shared and I thought at first that 6d would be good enough for the collection. The chap however made a good case. Tracts are a small side issue. The Society provides all kinds of good books that are necessary and much wanted. Some people despise them but some despise books well worth reading. We are not always in the mood.

I tell you of these trifling incidents because your account of your own life is so intensely interesting to us. I had no holiday last year but it is almost as good as a holiday to enter into some of your life. It is a delight to think that the worst hardships and dangers are over and that you may now see life or some interesting phases of it.

As spring and summer come I hope the change of season will only bring a change for the better in your life.

Dorothy Revell sent to your sisters a Christmas card which appealed to me and which I can repeat or quote with all sincerity.

"Contessina, forgive an old man's babble. But I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got; but there is much, very much that, while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it. Take heaven. No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Take peace. The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind

it, yet within our reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see, and to see we have only to look."

The greatest joy to me in your letters is that you see the good things in life. It has been a pleasure to me always to find you and your sisters have great power of enjoying both work and play.

There have been some little changes in home life which may amuse you. Bacon is not an uncommon sight at our breakfast table and after supper Ella and Mildred not infrequently light up cigarettes. How do these things affect me? Well, I have not changed, but I consider it is infinitely more important that the family should be free and feel that there is no restraint at home, - at least in such small matters. Any harm which can come from bacon and tobacco is remote and I do not wish any grown up to follow me like a sheep. I still believe that if anyone aims at the highest, - to obtain the greatest pleasure in life which only comes with the very best of health, - my plan will have to be adopted. But everyone must find out their ways for themselves. And so I smile and make no rude remarks.

Now I had better tell you something of your relatives and friends.

Arthur has gone into hospital on Putney Heath but has not yet called on us although he has been there since the 6<sup>th</sup> inst.

I went to Muswell Hill with Aggie & Mildred on the 27<sup>th</sup> Dec and your mother went last Friday. Buff has spent a lot of money and has got a very handsome home. They have a grand piano, new pictures, new carpets, new settee, and I am not coveting. Purchasing just now has to be done at enormous cost. Now is the time to save. A stock in the bank will tell a silent tale for years to come. I am clearing off my arrears and shall be glad to put a little by for a rainy day. The time has come for me to prepare for my retirement and as I do not want to be idle I am hoping to get some little capital together in addition to the thousand which I shall receive.

Your suggestion that you may leave the army has made me think. You do not want to be merely a link in somebody else's chain. You must have a

machine for yourself. I want to write to you about explosives, - a matter which will be useful to you in the army and valuable if you leave it. They turn on a knowledge of nitrogen and I wonder how much chemistry you know. I do not want to bore you but shall be very pleased to go into the matter if you care to do so.

Nitrogen explosives may be useful for motors as well as for war purposes and success in business will depend on doing something a bit better than others are doing it.

More anon.

Yrs GAH

3 Woodlands Road,  
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London SW13

23<sup>rd</sup> March 1919

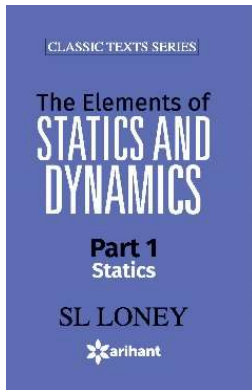
Dear C.G. (Note added from Cyril: I am in BELGIUM. Since the Armistice CHARLEROI area. VILLERS PERWIN village)

Several times during the past week a joyful cry has gone up. "Another letter" and the one who has got it first has been able to retain it on condition that she read it aloud. The last arrived last evening and we found it on our return from a Whist Party at the Revell's. "Revell's" is appropriate here as we reached home at 11.45pm with first prize. Your mother has had a busy week and was rather exhausted before she left but looked 20 years younger 2 hours after leaving home when she was in her element amongst friends. She was glad to hear from you that the parcel had arrived but she fears that you think there is a greater stock of your clothing etc at home than actually exists.

Your last letter dated the 18<sup>th</sup> appears to have been posted on the 20<sup>th</sup> and if so the postal arrangements are improving as it arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. I hope this will not occupy more than 2 days on its journey.

We were very interested in the photos. Some are very clear but the two most important show you against an unsuitable background. The sky instead of the Chateau would have matters clearer. I am quite ready to go in for photography now but I have always felt that I would not spend time over it unless I can turn out pictures, - something artistic, - and, as you recommend special care in buying a gramophone to buy a good one, I think the same rule applies in buying a camera. It is good to have even crude reminders of some incidents in one's life but there is additional satisfaction when the reminders are really pictures. Trixie tells me you have to buy her a camera. I did not give her what I should have liked last birthday and if you would allow me I should like to join you in buying a fine camera for her. Anything can be paid up to £10 or £12 and I am quite ready to give £5. - but do not let me influence your amount or your plans.

I have been rather attracted to the idea of getting a camera for enlarging. One is displayed in a shop window at 22/- but I find it is easy to pay 12 guineas. In our ignorance we cannot see why we should pay the extra money. I guess there is good reason, and I want to consult someone who knows. Your mother and I are going to spend the evening next Wednesday with the Stalkers and as Will Stalker has turned out some fairly good results I am going to talk the matter over with him. There is a Mr Seaton living at Wimbledon and employed at the Army & Navy Stores as a photographer, who might help me. He married a Miss Bennett, who is now a terrible invalid as Mrs Seaton, suffering from rheumatoid arthritis.



A few days ago I sent off Loney's Dynamics and have not, so far, been able to find any book about Statics but I will look into the matter again. You will not do any good with either subject unless you get as keenly interested in them as you are in football or photography. One wants to see their practical applications and perhaps you will be drawn towards them by your Artillery work. I had thought of writing something about them but think I cannot do better than confine myself to photography this time.

3 Woodlands Road,  
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London SW13

27th March 1919

Dear Adjutant

*(Note added from Cyril: at Chateau Jumere near Charleroi – Brussels Rd at Quatre Bras)*

We are following the movement with interest. The attitude of the Germans is in accordance with my estimate of their character, - bullies when on top and slimy when underneath and well in hand. But they behaved nicely to me in 1886. If they are very subservient now they are wise. They were wise to surrender when they did and they escaped severe punishment. But the Belgians had not that kind of wisdom and we would rather die than be so wise. We despise the wisdom. We would not adopt it ourselves and we have no respect for the Germans who are wiser.

**Quatre Bras** ([kat.ʁə bʁɑ], French for crossroads; literally "four arms") is a hamlet in the municipality of Genappe, Wallonia, Belgium. It lies on the crossroad of the Charleroi–Brussels road (currently named N5) and the Nivelles–Namur road south of Genappe.

On June 16, 1815, near the crossroads of Quatre Bras, the Battle of Quatre Bras (part of the Waterloo Campaign) was fought between contingents of the Anglo-Allied army and the left wing of the French Army. There are several monuments to the battle at Quatre Bras.

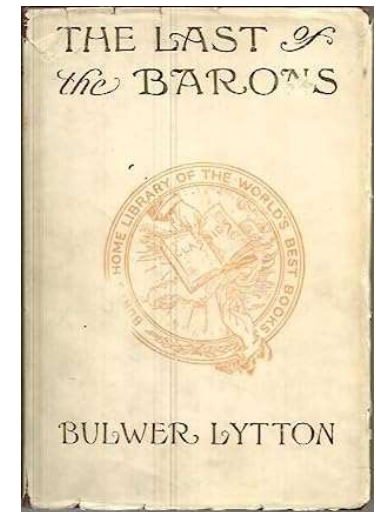
You will find a little practice at typewriting useful, a little extra trouble at first, but an ultimate saving.

We were at the Stalkers last night and I had a talk about photography. Will Stalker knows the routine but nothing of the Chemistry and without that one cannot make much independent progress. Did you study Chemistry at all at School? It is very interesting. One should read *The Last of the Barons* and *Lanoni* by Lord Lytton to get fascinated. Shall I send you a copy of either?

Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Baron Lytton PC, was an English novelist, poet, playwright, and politician. Lord Lytton was a florid, popular writer of his day, who coined such phrases as "the great unwashed", "pursuit of the almighty dollar", "the pen is mightier than the sword", and the infamous incipit "It was a dark and stormy night."

but he uses glass plates. Before the war they cost about 1/- a dozen, - now four times the amount. He develops and fixes in a dark room and prints copies at leisure. His results are excellent, - things of beauty and joys for ever. The last photo you sent, - larger than the others, was very good. The dark pony showed up well on the background.

One of the principal things appears to be to obtain the best possible lens. The making of glass was studied at Jena and they made a glass there which did not stop any light. Most glass does, more or less. Since 1914 our stock of glass has fallen of and prices have gone up. This is a shocking bad time for buying anything, so that I shall consider carefully before making any purchase.



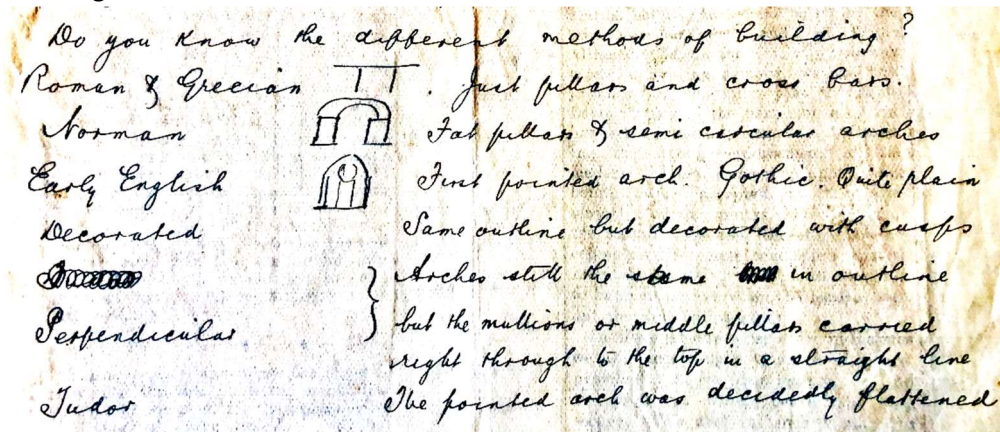
Reverting to photography, - I want to find out the theory of the film. Will Stalker has a splendid camera given to him by his father-in-law



Do you know whether "Territorial Officers" retain their rank by courtesy after demobilization? Capt Greenwood enlisted for duration of war or rather got his Commission and as he has left the army I addressed envelope ??? G – Esq, but fear I was wrong.

Recently I got a book called Popular Fallacies which was very interesting. One was as to what Eve ate in the Garden of Eden and what she gave Adam. Do you know? Would you bet 6d you are correct?

I will send you some of them later. One is that smoke is a protection against infection or diseases. Another is that the name of the Maid of



Orleans was Joan of Arc – It was Jeanne Darc and the apostrophe is a blunder. Another is that King John signed Magna Charta. (The seal was probably put on in Chancery) Another that Julius Caesar was Emperor. That Christ was born in the year 1, - that Carton invented printing, - that Henry V was sent to prison by Judge Gascoigne etc etc.

We have not heard from Mildred last few days but expect her home soon to be examined by specialist.

Yours ever

GAH

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 1919

Your two letters both dated 3.4.19 arrived this evening at 7pm. I was at a Committee meeting of the C.E.M.S at Westminster and your mother had taken Francis & Trixie to the Wimbledon Theatre. By the same post came an invitation to those two of your sisters to go to Steyning tomorrow and stay a week with her. I hope they will both accept as the weather is wonderful. There is very much that is beautiful and interesting in the Sussex Downs and the small towns beneath them. Trixie should get some fine photos. Scenery is good and there are some very good specimens of very ancient Churches, - Norman architecture.

Do you know the different methods of building?

Roman Grecian - Just pillars and cross bars  
Norman – Fat pillars and semi circular arches  
Early English – First pointed arch. Gothic. Quite plain  
Decorated – same outline but decorated with cusps  
Perpendicular – Arches still the same in outline but the mullions or middle pillars carried right through to the top in a straight line  
Tudor – The pointed arch was decidedly flattened

In Belgium you should find a good deal of Gothic architecture of a very decorative kind.

After the Tudor there was a Renaissance of the Classical Roman & Grecian, very frequently with a triangle on columns like we used to have at St Mary's Balham.

The following newspaper cuttings were glued on to the reverse of the last page of the letter.



### AN UNWILLING CONVERT.

After the Cameroons he decided, and so did we, that he was too old for his job, and in his own words said: "I be old, old man, make me leave the work, sar." On retiring he had a nice little sum due to him from the Government, and he informed us that he and his wife were going to open a little store in the village, and, amongst other things, sell trade gin. Some time after, when I was strolling through the village, Maisie, as usual, was sitting at the receipt of custom with a strong air of proprietorship, while James, dressed in flowing garments, looking very sheepish and crest-fallen, was self-consciously fiddling with beads and in his lap a book that looked suspiciously like the Koran. So I went up and asked him what he thought he was doing. He replied, "He no be my palaver, sar; Maisie she talk plenty, plenty, sar, that Christian be no good for me because I done drink all the gin that live for shop, what for she make I turn Murray now I no be fit to drink any more." Poor Jameal!

### NOTES AND ASIDES.

History is ever repeating itself. The present fulminations against the "jazz" and its kindred are an echo of the outcry something over a century ago against the waltz, then a new arrival to the ballroom. Then, as now, one half the town danced to the new rhythms, while the other half frowned on the novelty as "coarse and vulgar." One of the squibs of the day, which ran:  
While waltzing females, with unblushing face,  
Disdain to dance, beg in a man's embrace:  
How arts improve when modesty is dead,  
And sense and taste are, like our lullion, fled  
would need little emendation to serve the anti-jazzers to-day.

Byron was on the orthodox side in the controversy, and denounced the waltz in an anonymous poem, one line of which ran, "What, the girl I adore by another embraced." Ill-natured people ascribed his disapproval with the innovation to the fact that his lameness made it impossible that he should waltz. Anyway, he changed his opinion later on, and wrote:

To one and all the lovely stranger came,  
And every ballroom echoes with her name.

One centenary has passed without notice—the hundredth anniversary on Tuesday of the birth of George Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1859 to 1895. He died full of years in 1909, but lives in stone on a prancing charger in Whitehall. A soldier of the old school, and conservative of military tradition, he was rather a thorn in the side of the Army reformers. Like Macmahon, his motto was 'J'y suis je reste,' and all efforts to shift him proved vain till "C.B." became War Secretary. Withal he was a generous host, a capital raconteur, and had the finest collection of snuff-boxes in the country.

One of his sons dabbled in journalism, and for a brief period in the seventies owned and conducted THE SUNDAY TIMES. He took his job very seriously, doffing his coat, turning up his shirt-sleeves, and dropping his braces over his shoulders before he sat down to run through the proofs. A pipe and an eyeglass completed his equipment.

Nowadays the great world only passes through Bow Street on its way to Covent Garden (shortly to be reopened) or Drury Lane Theatre. The street has "come down" sorely in the world, for, as Leigh Hunt reminds us in "The Town," it was once the Bond Street of London. People of fashion occupied its houses, and mantuas floated up and down its pavements. Mrs. Bracegirdle began an epilogue of Dryden's with saying:

I've had to-day a dozen *billet-doux*  
From fops and wits and cits and  
Bow-street beaux.

Sir Walter Scott, in a note on this couplet, says, "A *billet-doux* from Bow Street would now be more alarming than flattering."

The other day a busman repartee of the courteous type was addressed to a fussy lady from the provinces, who asked, three times in five minutes, to be set down at Harrod's. When she reached it she still asked doubtfully, "Is this Harrod's?" "Yus, lydy, end if you'll be so kyind as to keep your seat end wyte a shyke, we'll tyke the bus hinside for yer." And this was a neat retort overhead in a Tube exit, and addressed to an officious person by a passenger coming in. The officious person said, "This is the way out, sir."—"Well, get out."

A man who believed that he knew all about parrots, and said so, offered to teach what he believed to be a young, mute bird to say "Hello" in one lesson. As a matter of fact, the bird was a fluent talker, and could have passed a fairly searching examination in General Knowledge. Its tutor sat down and said "Hello" in a clear voice for ten minutes, the parrot paying not the slightest attention. The tutor took a few minutes' rest and repeated his instruction for another ten minutes, the parrot apparently fast asleep. At the final "Hello," the bird opened one eye, gazed superciliously at the man, snapped out "Number engaged," and went to sleep again.

Most people have been bothered at times by a quotation which they cannot "place." Some weeks ago I read in a newspaper the phrase "bag of mystery," applied to a sausage, and it worried me at intervals till a couple of days ago. An adjacent piano began to strum, "The Mikado," and my mind leapt thus—"Mikado"—"Patience"—"chaff of aesthetes"—Henley as well as Gilbert. Then I turned to a favourite bookshelf and found "Culture in the Slums"—"O crikey, Bill," she ses to me, she ses, "Look sharp," ses she, "with them there scesiges, Yea sharp with them there bags of mystereec: For lo," she ses, "For lo, old pal," ses she, "I'm bloomin peckish, neither more or less." It was in that period that Henley translated a famous Villon Ballade into the slang of English thieves, perfectly rendering "Tout aux tavernes et aux filles" by "Booze and the blowens cop the lot."

A new political leader has emerged on the horizon at Westminster in the person of Mr. George Lambert—Farmer George, as he is sometimes called—whom the Coalition Liberals have elected as their sessional chairman. Incidentally, he was returned at the General Election as an Independent Liberal, and not a supporter of the Government, who did not send him the "coupon." But as soon as Parliament assembled he cast his vote for moderate counsels, and, indeed, I hear, urged the Independent Liberals not to go into Opposition. His view was that the war is not over until the peace is made, and that then will be time enough for the resumption of party activities.

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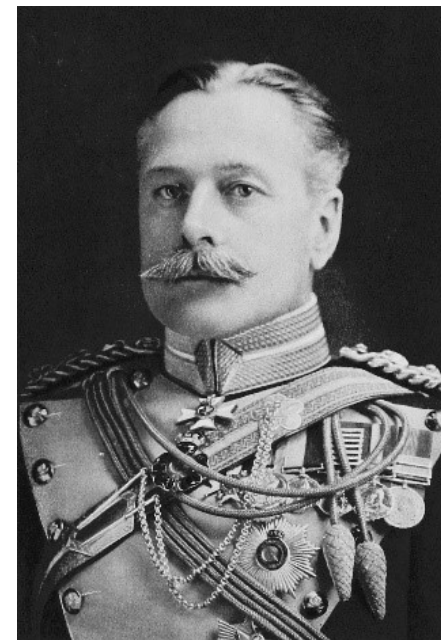
13<sup>th</sup> April 1919

Dear C.G. (Note added from Cyril: at Chateau Jumere'e probably near Villers Perwin)

You wrote so frequently after getting back to Belgium that you spoiled us and it seems quite a long time since last Monday when your last missive arrived with the numerous enclosures. It has been a real April week. Today we have alternated between bright sunshine, light showers and hailstorms. But it is grand to have the sun again. We are a quiet party at home today. I have been doing a little in the garden, - your mother and Ella visited Mrs Leggatt and now we are all writing to tell you about it. Cock-a-doodle do! However there is not much more to tell about ourselves. We are all right.

Yesterday I came across an explanation of the new method of keeping time at sea. If you go on trips around the world you will want to know something about it. It is merely organization for simplification and has already been adopted by the French and the Italians. Of course there must be differences of times in different longitudes and the new scheme is not to make any change until you can make a complete hour change. The world is therefore divided into 24 zones and as a ship passes from one zone to the next the clock is shifted one hour forward or backward. This maintains local time with sufficient accuracy and permits immediate comparison with Greenwich time. In India and Australia I understand there are semi-zones of half the width of the full zone and consequently the times vary by half hours. This system is now in use practically everywhere except in Mexico, South America and Asia.

Have you read Sir D Haig's last report? (Earl Haig)





[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas\\_Haig,\\_1st\\_Earl\\_Haig](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Haig,_1st_Earl_Haig)

It was published last Friday and although rather long, contained much that is very interesting. Perhaps what attracted me most was his explanation of the final collapse. He regards the 4 years campaign as one great battle and considers the fighting in 1916 and 1917 greatly helped towards the final result. The last desperate attack of the French at Waterloo occupied minutes. The last German attack commenced in March 1918 and last 4 months!

Naturally he refers to all branches of the services. It will probably be discussed between you and your fellow officers but you should make a point of taking it up at different times and considering the matter in instalments. It is too big to do all at once thoroughly. I will send you a copy if you have not got one.

John O'London's weekly is so interesting and my spare time so little that it has not yet been posted, but it shall come tomorrow. You should read H G Wells on the method of teaching History and bear it in mind if you become Lecturer to the forces on the Rhine. Working up the matter would do you or me good even if it did not benefit our listeners very much.



Yesterday afternoon I visited the Middlesex Guildhall built by Sir James Carmichael a few years ago to the design of a Mr Gibson who lived in a house facing Tooting Bec. Your mother used to meet Mrs Gibson. The building is between the Central Hall Westminster and the Abbey and is one of the finest specimens possible of up to date architecture. There is much that is beautiful.

I expect you are not very interested in it now but you would be if you went over the place and had it explained to you. I did not know until yesterday that there was a River Tyburn flowing into the Thames by Westminster Bridge. It is filled up long since but once flowed over the ground on which the Guildhall is built. The building is used for 2 purposes. – (1) as a Council Chamber for the Middlesex

County Council and (2) as a Sessions House where Criminal Trials are held. It is strange that the Middlesex Guildhall should not be in Middlesex County but in London.

The **Middlesex Guildhall** is a court building in Westminster which houses the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.<sup>[1]</sup> The building stands on the south-western corner of Parliament Square, in close proximity to the Palace of Westminster.<sup>[2]</sup> In 1970, the building became Grade II\* listed.<sup>[3]</sup>

Constructed in the early 20th century, the building was designed by Scottish architect J. S. Gibson and sculpted by British artist Henry Fehr.<sup>[3][4]</sup> In 1970, the guildhall was officially listed by Historic England as Neo-Gothic with Flemish-Burgundian references.<sup>[3]</sup>

Initially serving as an administrative centre for Middlesex County Council and as a Court of quarter session has undergone several iterations.<sup>[5]</sup> Disbanded in 1965, the building later served as a Crown Court until the establishment of the Supreme Court in the early 21st century.<sup>[6]</sup>



By Christine Smith - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=34065050>

Well I must close to catch the post. If I repeat myself please forgive me for I cannot tell what I have written, I often think of things and mean to write them but do not get time to put them all on paper. I am still collecting lines from "In Memoriam". Here is a specimen.

The thing we long for, that we are  
For one transcendental moment.

This assumes our ideals are good. Unfortunately some people do not aspire to the great things.

Here is another.  
You were our pride, - we dreamed great things for you.  
God intervened, and so – the dream came true.

We are hoping to hear from you and that will give us a happy Easter. May you have much happiness.  
In Keeling's Letters, recently published, he wrote "Life is a game, if you lose the sense of adventure in it the attitude of readiness for adventure, the sense of fun of sitting on a large orange spinning thro' space you have lost a precious thing."

Yrs ever  
GAH

*NB.  
Sadly, there is a long gap before the next letter to Cyril. Perhaps this was because he came home from Belgium now the war and its immediate aftermath was over. Perhaps Cyril disposed of them as, on the envelope in which these letters were found, Cyril had stated that many letters had been destroyed.*

*He wrote a note at the start of this letter that he was to leave for India early in 1920. He certainly had not lost the sense of adventure referred to by his father at the end of the last letter! Unbeknown to Cyril at that time, India was to be the place he met Elaine and married her just a few years later, in 1926! So, our own history was created.*

*As you will see, this letter was written the day after George had said Good bye to Cyril.*

3 Woodlands Road,  
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23<sup>rd</sup> November 1919

There are several things I should have liked to have said yesterday when I wished you Good bye but there was little time and words do not come readily in a bustle when there are many distractions. Your mother and I do not intend to be unhappy when you sail, - our main desire being that you should carry away happy memories of home and the assurance of our love for you. You will only be away for 3 years. It cannot be very long before your mother and I will have to say Goodbye for a longer period than that and there will be no reason why we should not all keep smiling. We feel we have done all we can, in our own way, for our children and we are very thankful for the good result. We have had splendid material to work on and we hope that all our children will continue to advance. It is always necessary to Look Ahead, but not with fear or neglect of the present. If you will love doing good work it will make your life as a soldier very happy and successful. Give all your energies to work and you may safely leave the reward to look after itself.

*Sadly, the rest of this moving letter is not found. Perhaps Cyril just kept this page because he wanted to keep these very personal words from his father.*